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A TRAVELER'S LIFE LIST

by PATRICIA SCHULTZ

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Island Charm off the Coast of Cape Cod

MARTHA'S VINEYARD AND NANTUCKET

Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Cape Cod's two celebrated islands float just off its southern shore. The 100-square-mile Martha's Vineyard is the larger and more serene, a place of beautiful beaches, woods, cranberry bogs, and charming inns,

distinguished from its neighbor Nantucket by its proximity to the mainland and its variety of landscapes.

The offbeat, fun village of Oak Bluffs is one of six on the island, distinguished by its colorful Victorian homes and 1876 working carousel, said to be the oldest in the country. Vineyard Haven is known for the Black Dog Tavern, purveyor of ubiquitous T-shirts and tasty pub grub. In West Tisbury the Norman Rockwell-style Alley's General Store is a proud "Dealer in Almost Everything." The dramatic cliffs of Aquinnah (aka Gay Head) and its landmark lighthouse are the island's Land's End, while in Menemsha you'll find the hilltop Beach Plum Inn and Restaurant. It has an excellent water-view restaurant and access to some of the island's best beaches, perfect for sunset watching.

In Edgartown (the largest of the Vineyard's villages and the one with the most buzz) is Atria, a restaurant in an 1890s sea captain's house with a lively bar and famous burgers. The 19th-century Charlotte Inn is the finest hostelry on the island, with a fine Italian restaurant, Il Tesoro, and 23 antiques-filled guest rooms in five buildings enveloped by flowering gardens.

Thirty miles off the coast of Cape Cod, 49-square-mile Nantucket exists in its own insular world. Though its population of 10,000 swells to five times that every summer, the island retains a world-apart atmosphere. Stringent zoning laws help maintain the



In the 19th century, Vineyard Haven was one of New England's busiest ports.

traditional New England appearance of the "Little Gray Lady of the Sea," whose historic district includes more than 800 Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival houses. Nantucket was once the whaling capital of the world (part of *Moby Dick* was set here) and its Whaling Museum illustrates the island's importance in the "blubber-boiling" industry.

The posh, weathered-shingled Wauwinet stands in romantic end-of-the-world isolation adjacent to 26 miles of protected shoreline, with sweeping ocean vistas from most of the simply furnished, spacious rooms. At the inn's restaurant, Topper's, you'll find creative takes on regional favorites. The Wauwinet's sister property, The White Elephant, brings the same style and charm into town on the waterfront.

WHERE: Seasonal ferries for Martha's Vineyard depart from Woods Hole, New Bedford,

Hyannis, and Falmouth; ferries for Nantucket depart from Harwich Port and Hyannis.

VISITOR INFO: *Martha's Vineyard:* www.mvy.com. *Nantucket:* www.nantucketchamber.org.

BLACK DOG TAVERN: Tel 800-626-1991 or 508-693-4786; www.theblackdog.com. *Cost:* dinner \$30. **BEACH PLUM INN:** Tel 508-645-9454; www.beachpluminn.com. *Cost:* from \$195 (off-peak), from \$295 (peak); dinner \$65. *When:* closed Nov–Apr. **ATRIA:** Tel 508-627-5850; www.atriamv.com. *Cost:* dinner \$60. *When:* closed Dec–Mar. **THE CHARLOTTE INN:**

Tel 508-627-4151; www.charlotteinn.net. *Cost:*

from \$325; dinner \$70. **WHALING MUSEUM:** Tel 508-228-1894; www.nha.org. *When:* closed

Nov–Jun. **THE WAUWINET:** Tel 800-426-8718 or 508-228-0145; www.wauwinet.com. *Cost:* from \$350 (off-peak), from \$550 (peak); prix-fixe dinner \$85. *When:* closed mid-Oct–May.

WHITE ELEPHANT: Tel 800-445-6574 or 508-228-2500; www.whiteelephanthotel.com. *Cost:*

from \$225. **BEST TIMES:** in Martha's Vineyard: mid-Jun for A Taste of the Vineyard; Jul for Edgartown Regatta. In Nantucket: late May for Figawi Sailboat Race; 1st weekend in Dec for Christmas Stroll and Dec for Nantucket Noel.

A Taste of History at America's Symbolic Doorstep

THANKSGIVING AT PLIMOTH PLANTATION

Plymouth, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

At Plimoth Plantation, it's always 1627. The living museum and its costumed "residents" re-create New England's first successful European settlement as well as a Native village. Thanksgiving dinner has its



Mayflower II was completed in 1957.

roots in a harvest celebration that 52 Pilgrims shared with 90 members of the Wampanoag tribe in 1621, one year after the settlers sailed from England. It included fowl (probably ducks and geese rather than turkey), venison, corn, and most likely fresh and dried fruits and vegetables.

Every fall Plimoth Plantation re-creates a harvest meal from that period as well as serving a classic American Thanksgiving dinner.

Make your way to the downtown waterfront to visit (the surprisingly small) Plymouth Rock and *Mayflower II*, a 106-foot-long replica of the ship that carried 102 Pilgrims (with their

livestock and worldly goods) and took some 66 tempestuous days to cross the Atlantic.

Learn of the area's role in the whaling trade—which peaked in the mid-19th century—in New Bedford, a 45-minute drive southwest of Plymouth. The New Bedford Whaling Museum, the world's largest, displays a wide variety of artifacts, as well as an 89-foot half-scale model of the fully rigged whaling bark *Lagoda*, built in 1826, and Kobo, a 66-foot skeleton of a juvenile blue whale.

WHERE: 40 miles southeast of Boston. Tel 800-262-9356 or 508-746-1622; www.plimoth.org. *Cost:* dinner from \$65. *When:* closed late Nov–late Mar. **NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM:** Tel 508-997-0046; www.whalingmuseum.org. **BEST TIMES:** selected dates in Oct and Nov for harvest and Thanksgiving meals.